



Miller Message for January 2015

It's party time in Miller

Miller will host several very different 'fun' events in January:

GARDEN PARTY IN WINTER.

The Miller Garden Club is bringing in a celebrity speaker for its Winter Wine and Cheese Soiree. Mike Nowak, who is host of "The Mike Nowak Show" on Chicago radio, has won acclaim for his radio and television shows on gardening and garden design, but he is also a hands-on Master Gardener and Openlands Tree Keeper who brings a sense of humor to his subject. He will be delivering a talk titled "*That Ain't No Way to Treat a Tree*". The party will take place at the Gardner Center for the Arts, 540 S. Lake Street on Saturday, January 17, beginning with a social hour at 6:30 and the Nowak talk at 7:30. The evening is a fundraiser for the garden club, to help finance the extensive public gardens on Lake Street, at the South Shore stop, and elsewhere in the Miller community. Guests are asked to bring a dish to pass and BYOB. Admission is \$10 for the general public or \$5 for garden club members.

2015 WHITE PARTY.

The Gardner Center, 540 S. Lake Street, will be transformed into an indoor winter forest for this year's White Party, scheduled for Saturday, January 24 starting at 8:00 pm. (White is the color of the clothing, not the participants). Guests can sip a variety of drinks, nibble on comfort food, appetizers and sweets, and dance to music by local DJs. Tickets are \$35 and can be purchased through Eventbrite.com or at the door. There will also be a silent auction with the proceeds going to the Hospice of the Calumet Area. For more information, contact Laura Hecht, fitnessfunk@hotmail.com.

TRIVIA NIGHT

Temple Israel will host its annual Trivia Night on Saturday, January 24. The doors will open at 5:30 pm and the

games begin at 6:30. There will be food, a cash bar, a silent auction and prizes for the game winners. The event is a fundraiser for the Temple and its Community Chest. This is a popular event, and only 20 tables of 10 are available, so sign up early! Tables of 8 cost \$120, tables of 10 are \$150, and single individuals are \$20. To reserve a place, send your check to Temple Israel, 601 N. Montgomery St., Gary, IN 46403, or call 743-0624 for more information.

Miller community deals with public safety issues

STATUS OF BURGLARIES. Hundreds of local residents attended community meetings last November, with a focus on the large number of recent burglaries in the Miller area. As a result of the public interest, police presence in the community was stepped up and residents became more vigilant.

Since then, the police have identified and charged several persons involved in home burglaries, and they have names of other individuals whom they are keeping an eye on.

The Northwest Indiana Times website, www.nwi.com, presents, each week, a map of reported criminal activity in specific communities, including Gary. (Just page down to Regional Crime Report). The current map covers Christmas week, and it shows that people in Miller had better things to do that week than breaking into neighbors' homes. You can check the website yourself to see if the favorable trend continues.

PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES. Here in Miller, this is a time of transition for public safety. For more than a dozen years, MCC volunteers staffed the Community Oriented Policing (COP) office on Lake Street. However, for the past year the office has been largely inactive. Calls from residents have diminished, the number of volunteers has dwindled, and visits by police officers have been infrequent. At the same time, the building which houses the COP office has been donated to the Miller Beach Arts and Creative District (MBACD), which already operates the Gardner Center for the Arts across the street. The MBACD is still deciding what they will do with the property.

Meanwhile, Police Chief McKinley supports the concept of community-oriented policing, and he is thinking about setting up two police sub-stations, from which officers would be dispatched at the beginning of each turn of duty instead of working out of police headquarters on Van Buren Street. In addition, the Police Department has reactivated its burglary unit, under the direction of Officer Brian Farrow, who can be reached at 881-1209.

The police and the MCC are still encouraging residents to form block clubs and neighborhood watch groups, which help neighbors get acquainted and look after each other. For assistance, contact Ron Nichols at the Methodist Church number, 938-4106, or get in touch with Barb Hansen at the MCC number, 938-8831.

A WORD OF CAUTION. In the November Miller Message, readers were advised to report “suspicious activities” to the police. This is still good advice, but please don’t get carried away. Every unfamiliar person walking down the street should not be considered “suspicious” and reported to the police. This destroys the bonds of trust among residents of the community and will discourage police response when genuinely worri-some activity is observed.

Another strip club in Miller?

Panicos Kaloghirou and Mike Scandura, who operate a strip club and “book store” near the Gary Airport, have bought the former Pandora’s on Rt. 20, just off the Gary East toll road exit, which they plan to continue operating as a strip club. Although the property functioned as a strip club for many years, it is zoned industrial, and the new owners need approval from the City Council for a special use permit to continue operating that type of business. The issue will be coming to a vote at the **Common Council meeting on Tuesday, January 6 at 6:00 pm**. If you have an opinion on this subject, come to the meeting and let the council know what you think.

Eric Reaves, President of the Miller Citizens Corp. (MCC) and George Rogge, President of the Miller Business Association (MBA) plan to speak in opposition to the strip club. Even though this business would occupy a vacant building and would hire about 20 employees, the local leaders argue that this type of business, located at the gateway to the Miller community, is not compatible with the long-term goal of promoting Miller as a tourist destination.

The MCC has a long history of opposing strip clubs in our community, in part by lobbying against liquor licenses for such businesses.

Duly noted

LEGACY FOUNDATION GRANT. The Legacy Foundation has awarded the Miller Community a grant under its Neighborhood Spotlight program, with the Miller Beach Arts and Creative District as the convening organization. The program aims to interview residents, business owners, and anyone who has an opinion on what will make Miller a better place to work, live, and play. With support from Legacy Foundation staff and consultants, the program will help Miller organize, decide and act on projects that could change the future of the community. The MBACD is now advertising for a community organizer to spearhead this effort. If you or someone you know would like to participate in this program, get in touch with Karren Lee at 219-306-6880. The first training session will be convened on Thursday, January 29, by the Indiana Association for Community Economic Development (IAECD) in partnership with the Legacy Foundation.

SPEED LIMITS. The posted speed limit on Oak Avenue west of St. Joseph Street is 30 mph – the standard for most residential streets in Gary. However, the posted speed limit east of St. Joseph Street to County Line Road is 20 mph. With urging from councilwoman Shannon, the city’s Traffic Division has agreed that the posted speed limit

is a mistake and should be corrected. Now, we just need the City Engineer to get the signs changed to show the proper 30 mph speed limit. Keep your eyes peeled!

GARY AIR SHOW. By now, everyone in Miller is probably aware that the South Shore Air Show is slated to return to Miller Beach this coming July. The organizers of the show are still looking for sponsors, but it is fairly certain that there will be an air show and it will be here in Miller. Most area residents think this is a desirable development. Unfortunately, the air show is pre-empting the time and place of the popular Miller Garden Walk which had been scheduled for the weekend of **July 11 and 12**. Both the Aquatorium and the Marquette Park Pavilion are booked for all the summer weekends, and the Miller Garden Club could not find any alternative time or place to hold the garden walk. As a result, the gardeners will be presenting the **Spring Fling in mid-May** – an expansion of the annual plant sale with more emphasis on the sale of tschotschkies, the addition of a spring garden ‘peek’, and the sale of lunches and baked goods from Marilyn’s. Look for more details as the date for this event approaches.

MBA EVENT SIGN. The Miller Business Association (MBA) updates the sign at the corner of Grand Blvd and Miller Avenue, across from the Miller Town Hall, to advertise local events. Valery Kolodziej at Curves has been booking space on the sign, and her son has been updating the messages. However, Curves is closing for lack of business, and the task of reserving the sign is now being handled by Terry Payonk at Ayers Realtors (call 938-1188). As of now, the MBA is still looking for someone to update the message on the sign.

JANUARY 2015 MCC MEETING

THE NEXT MCC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY, JANUARY 12, AT 7:30 PM, IN THE MEETING ROOM OF THE MARQUETTE PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ON GRAND BLVD. MCC members are invited to attend and participate.

Contact the MCC between meetings at P.O.Box 2645, Gary, IN 46403, or e-mail mceaton@aol.com. You can also visit the MCC website at www.millercitizenscorp.org.

MEN AND BOYS. Joe Petras reports that the 2014 Men and Boys lunch, which was held this year at the Miller Bakery Café, raised \$680 for the benefit of the Marquette Kids Park. Next year will be the 25th anniversary of this annual event, and Petras is looking for something special to commemorate the occasion.

Winter at the Douglas Center

The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore offers a variety of activities throughout the winter. Some of these happenings will take place at the Douglas Center on Lake Street in Miller:

1. There is an **open house every Saturday from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm**, with interactive exhibits, a park video and a live animal room. If there is enough snow, you can **borrow cross-country skis or snowshoes** and explore the Miller Woods Trail just outside the center.
2. During the open house on **January 10**, Celebrate and honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders.
- 3) During the open house on **January 31**, join a ranger for a special puppet show in honor of Groundhog Day. Shows at 1:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. will explain where these furry rodents have been and how they survive the long winter.

There are also a wide range of activities taking place at the National Lakeshore Visitor Center on Rt. 49 in Porter County.

Visit us at www.MillerCitizensCorp.org